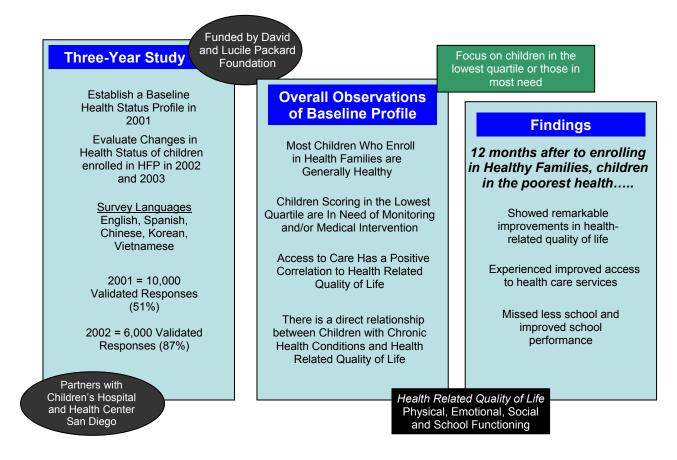


### Healthy Families Program Health Status Assessment Project



The coverage provided by the Healthy Families Program (HFP) made remarkable improvements in the health status of children who were in poor health upon enrollment in HFP. Researchers from the Health Status Assessment Project found that after one year in HFP these children:

- ✓ Gained astounding improvement in physical and psychosocial health status equal to the level of chronically ill children receiving excellent health care
- ✓ Experienced fewer sick days and missed fewer days of school
- ✓ Drastically improved in the their ability to pay attention in class and keep up in school activities
- Experienced fewer problems accessing and using health care

This paper represents a three (3) page digest of the project. The detailed report for both the baseline period and the first year results are available on the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board website at <a href="https://www.mrmib.ca.gov">www.mrmib.ca.gov</a> under the heading "Healthy Families Program" "Special Reports".



### Health Status Assessment Project – First Year Results

he Health Status Assessment Project is a three-year longitudinal survey that is allowing the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board (MRMIB) to evaluate the health status of children newly enrolled in the Healthy Families Program. The project examines the physical and psychosocial benefits of having access to comprehensive medical, dental and vision insurance.

The project is being conducted by MRMIB in partnership with researchers at the Center for Child Health Outcomes, Children's Hospital and Health Center, San Diego. Financial support is provided by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

The study was conducted by mailing the PedsQL<sup>TM</sup> 4.0 questionnaire to subscribers and their parents during the subscribers first month of enrollment. Twenty-thousand (20,000) subscribers who were newly enrolled in the months of February and March 2001 were selected for the survey. Questionnaires were mailed to the families in five languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean or Chinese) based on the language of the applicant.

Results of the returned questionnaires were compiled and analyzed to develop a <u>baseline</u> measurement of health status.

The identical questionnaire was mailed during February and March of 2002 to the sample subscribers who remained in the HFP over the one-year period or <u>year 1</u>. The data collected for <u>year 1</u> was compared with the <u>baseline</u> data to measure changes in health status.

#### <u>Focus on Children with the Poorest Health</u> <u>Status Profile – Lowest Quartile</u>

The <u>baseline</u> study showed, on average, children entering the Healthy Families Program were considered healthy. It was expected that healthy children who continued enrollment in the Healthy Families Program over the one year period would remain healthy. This assumption was confirmed as overall Total PedsQL<sup>TM</sup> 4.0 scores remained the same from <u>baseline</u> (81.38) to <u>year 1</u> (81.32).

Researchers expected that the change in health status would be in the lowest quartile of the sample, or in those children who had the lowest scores in the baseline year. These were the children defined as having the lowest health-related quality of life. Given this premise, the research team concentrated on the children in the *lowest quartile* -- or those in the greatest need of the comprehensive medical, dental and vision services offered by the Healthy Families Program.

Key findings from the study of these lowest quartile children are presented below:

- The Healthy Families Program meaningfully improved the health-related quality of life for children in the greatest need.
  - Families Program were considered healthy. With this in mind, the majority of the expected change in health status would be in the *lowest quartile*, or those children who had the lowest scores in the base year.

- Children in the poorest health (<u>lowest quartile</u>), as measured through the <u>year one</u> survey results, showed significant improvements in both physical psychosocial and composite health-related quality of life. PedsQL™ scores for this <u>lowest quartile</u> increased 25 percent, from 58 to 72, within the one year period of enrollment.
- Scores for "at-risk" children who scored two standard deviations below the mean at baseline (those who required immediate medical attention) showed exceptional gains in health related quality of life. Gains of 24 points (+55%) in total scores were registered from baseline to time 1. Physical scores almost doubled (+83%), while psychosocial scores improved by 20 points (+43%).
- ▶ PedsQL™ Total school functioning subscale scores increased by 24 percent, with remarkable improvements in scores most directly correlated to school performance, ("Paying attention in class" (+68%) and "Keeping up with school activities" (+68%). Children also missed less school due to illness and or doctor visits.

# The Healthy Families Program had a positive impact on children with chronic health conditions.

The greatest improvements were exhibited by children with a chronic health condition in the *lowest quartile*, with Total PedsQL<sup>TM</sup> scores improving from 58 to 66 from <u>baseline</u> to <u>year 1</u>.

- Meaningful improvements in health-related quality of life were achieved within ethnic demographics.
  - Results comparing the same groups after one year of enrollment indicate the scores for the <u>lowest quartile</u> improved "acrossthe-board".

## The Healthy Families Program improved access to care for its members.

- ► Improved access to care has a positive correlation to improved health-related quality of life as measured through the PedsQL<sup>TM</sup> 4.0.
- From <u>baseline</u> to <u>year 1</u>, children with a personal physician improved by 9 percent, problems getting care decreased by 6 percent and families foregoing needed care dropped by 10 percent.
- ► In the <u>year prior</u> to enrolling in the HFP, approximately 20 percent of the families identified a problem in receiving needed care for their child. Children identified with a chronic condition were twice as likely to experience an access problem.

# Families participating in the Healthy Families Program are excited about the program and are willing to participate

▶ Of the 10,241 members surveyed during their initial month of enrollment, 6,881 (67%) remained in the HFP. Of these 6,881, more than 87% (6,005) completed the second year survey.

To review the full report, go to the MRMIB website at <a href="www.mrmib.ca.gov">www.mrmib.ca.gov</a> - select "Healthy Families" and then "Special Reports".

Questions and comments can be e-mailed to Douglas Skarr, Research Program Specialist II, Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board at <a href="Dskarr@mrmib.ca.gov">Dskarr@mrmib.ca.gov</a>.